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Is Sask. in for fierce flood fight?

Preparing for the worst. New provincial committee, arsenal of equipment in position to deal with high spring water

ROSS ROMANIUK
Metro in Regina

The province is ramping up preparations for the floodwater, if and when it hits.

While the City of Regina had thousands of sandbags ready on Wednesday for potentially severe spring runoff, the Saskatchewan government has put barriers, pumps and other gear in position far outside the capital.

"We're preparing as well as we can for an extreme flood, and hoping that it doesn't occur," Jim Reiter, minister of government relations, told reporters after he was named by Premier Brad Wall as chairman of a provincial flood preparedness committee.

"You can't be prepared too early," added Reiter.

Spring damage

While the province braces for spring floods, many Saskatchewan residents are already suffering spring damage to their homes as SGI has reported more than 700 ice-dam claims this year.

- "It's specific type of damage ... and it's related to the heavy snowfall and the melting and re-freezing that we're seeing," said Kelley Brinkworth, manager of media relations for SGI.
- An ice dam is a buildup of ice on eavestroughs, creating a backup of melting water on a rooftop that causes it to drip into interior walls.

JANE CAULFIELD/METRO

Sandbags, piled high by the City of Regina, are ready for protecting properties from floodwater when the expected runoff begins. CONTRIBUTED/CITY OF REGINA

"Our people have been ensuring that we have enough supplies on hand. The department of highways has hundreds of people ready, and they're taking inventory and making sure they have equipment and supplies available, in the appropriate places."

Some of the equipment includes 30 steamers, which rid culverts of ice to get water flowing.

"It generates a high-pressure stream of steam. We use that to get rid of the blockage," said Doug Wakabayashi, spokesman for the Ministry of Highways. "It can actually help stop water from topping a road."

The committee of four cabinet ministers, said Reiter, is tasked with ensuring that flood-fighting operations are properly co-ordinated.

He noted he's concerned about potentially "very significant" flooding, possibly "sort of to the extent that we saw in 2011" when Saskatchewan suffered its worst such disaster in years.

The province has $182 million in its growth and financial security fund that Reiter said "will be called on if needed" for battling floodwater.

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Students put a new spin on the city's oldest bridge

Victoria Bridge.
Professor hopes students see both creative and corporate side of urban design

MORGAN MODJESKI
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A group of urban-design students at the University of Saskatchewan are trying to breathe new life into Saskatoon's oldest bridge.

Henry Lau, a professor at the University of Saskatchewan's department of regional and urban planning and an architect with the City of Saskatoon, wanted to provide his advanced urban-design class with a chance to take on a project in the real world by creating conceptual designs of the city's Victoria Bridge.

Those conceptual models are on display at the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery at the U of S in a display called Reconnecting the City of Bridges. Lau said he wanted students to go beyond the usual grey concrete sometimes associated with municipal infrastructure.

"One thing that I always tell my students is to put art into their urban planning and urban design," he said. "Especially in a city with a six-month winter, we certainly need a lot of colour and vibrancy."

Marcus Miller, director of the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery, said the show is an example of how his facility can showcase student art while providing the community with a window into some of the more interesting things happening on campus.

"We're considered to be one of the portals to the rest of the university, and more importantly to the city," said Miller. "The university is regarded as a bit of a bubble in the city ... so the Snelgrove Gallery is a way we can sort of connect to the community."

Prof. Henry Lau, front, poses with a group of students from his advanced urban-design class behind of one of the conceptual bridge designs at the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery at the University of Saskatchewan. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

Charities kick off spring with fundraising

Participants are seen frantically trying to decorate their umbrellas on Wednesday. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

To kick off Safeway's month-long fundraising campaign for Easter Seals Saskatchewan and Special Olympics Saskatchewan, the two organizations held an umbrella-decorating contest just in time for spring.

On Wednesday, about a dozen participants took part at the event at the 8th Street Safeway, and Su Huynh, manager of Camp Easter Seal, stressed the April campaign's importance.

"Last year alone, Safeway had sent about 54 kids to camp and they have raised money for a wheelchair-accessible playground. They have donated a lot of their time coming out to camp to do some spring cleaning, as well as staining the cabins that we have out there," said Huynh, noting Camp Easter Seal tries to improve the quality of life for those with disabilities.

Roger Dumont, CEO of Special Olympics Saskatchewan, noted the fundraising boosts events such as the upcoming Special Olympic Summer Games.

"We've got a lot of programs that we've got to keep going. We offer 15 or so sports ... and each one of those requires facilities and coaches, so some of the funding will go towards that," said Dumont.

"We have our Summer Games coming up in Saskatoon this year — from June 21 to 23 — and we're expecting about 350 athletes from all over Saskatchewan and another 250 to 300 volunteers and coaches.... So in the short term, were going to be using some of those resources to get those Games going."

Last year, Safeway raised $1.6 million for the two organizations. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

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Affordable housing too concentrated in some areas: Planner

A high concentration of affordable rental housing in some of the city's oldest neighbourhoods is causing some concern for a number of people, including city officials.

Facing the planning and operations committee for a second time on the issue, Alan Wallace, Saskatoon's chief city planner, warned committee members that these neighbourhoods — particularly Riversdale and Pleasant Hill —— have the potential to become ghettos.

"The main concern is that we are loading up two neighbourhoods in particular.... We need to realize the long-term impact would be (these areas) turning into a ghetto and you will not be able to back out of that," Wallace said to the committee on Tuesday.

Council is discussing curtailing financial incentives for new affordable housing developments in areas of high concentration, while providing more incentive options for developments in neighbourhoods with a lower concentration of rental housing.

"When it comes to affordable rental housing, I don't think we've seen (it) come across the desk in terms of any of the new areas," Coun. Charlie Clark said. "The numbers just don't work.... I personally think that getting affordable rental throughout the city is worth trying to achieve."

Coun. Pat Lorje and committee chair Coun. Randy Donauer said there should also be added incentives for people to buy a home in areas of high density, citing that more home ownership improves the stability of a neighbourhood.

The city planner's office will present a more detailed report to committee in a few weeks. JANE CAULFIELD/METRO

Mind your axles: City getting ready for pothole problems

That sinking feeling.
Drifting snow, wet conditions preventing city from patching roads

MORGAN MODJESKI
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Though spring has just arrived, the City of Saskatoon is seeing a spike in driver claims for pothole damage compared to last year.

The city solicitor's office says only two people reported claims related to potholes, sinkholes or rutting in January and February of 2012. This year, 18 such claims were made during the same months.

Pat Hyde, branch manager of public works, said the city is preparing for a challenging few months as wet conditions and late winter precipitation have hindered patching efforts.

"We have to have dry road conditions in order to patch, and with the drifting snow we had, that took our full focus and it also prevented us from getting out with patching," he said.

He also said the city doesn't have full patching equipment out as asphalt plants, which are contracted by the city, are not yet running.

The city is currently patching with a cold mix material, which isn't as pliable or as permanent as asphalt.

Hyde said the most important thing for drivers is to slow down if they expect to hit a pothole or puddle that could conceal a pothole.

"You can have potholes form in the middle of July, with clear, warm temperatures and just the presence of water," he said.

"But definitely in the springtime, because of the freeze-thaw cycle, you'll have many more than you normally would throughout any part of the year."

In 2012, there were a total of 140 pothole, sinkhole or rutting claims.

City administrators are advising drivers to be aware of their surroundings and slow down if they see a pothole like this one on Victoria Avenue. Drivers should also be on alert for puddles that could conceal a pothole. JANE CAULFIELD/METRO

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CONTRIBUTED

SWOLLEN MEMBERS GET BACK TO THEIR ROOTS

By Simon Hiatt/for Metro

It would be understandable if a group that has been together for more than a decade and a half, and has toured the country innumerable times, was a little road weary.

But as the guys of Swollen Members prepared to hit the road in support of their new album Beautiful Death Machine, they said just the opposite was true.

"It's exciting. It feels reminiscent of a time when everything was fresh and you didn't really know what was lying ahead of you," said rapper Prevail. "There's a great feeling in the air right now."

The new record is also inspiring some nostalgic feelings in the group, and they believe their fans will have a similar reaction.

A formula that works

"It will be high energy — that's one of our trademarks."

Prevail, on the band's new show

"It's a record where we feel we were able to get back to our roots, our original sound. There's a lot of integrity on the album."

But Prevail says the album's old-school feeling may have less to do with the sound than the motivation behind the tracks, suggesting the band might have spent too much time focusing on other things that come along with music-industry success.

"We didn't worry about, 'Oh we need to have something for the radio to play' or 'We've got to have songs that will make effectual videos.' We just went back to the basics."

That formula, which Prevail describes as "putting crazy songs over crazy beats and seeing what happens," is certainly one that worked well for Swollen Members in the past.

The Vancouver-based band, which also includes Madchild and Rob the Viking, has received four Juno Awards and five MuchMusic Video Awards, along with a great deal of critical acclaim.

But it has at times also fallen victim to the excesses that can come with musical success. Madchild developed an addiction to painkillers that nearly tore the group apart, before he got clean.

"I think we've been through the most rigorous part of our career with Mad's addiction. That really pushed us to the limits. But we made it through and came out better people, better musicians and better friends because of it."

The group is taking advantage of the fresh start, playing a series of shows through April including a stop in Saskatoon on April 4. Prevail says the show will feature new songs but also more familiar material.

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Iconic rodent. Some complain Wiarton Willie was wrong this year

The central Ontario town best known as the home of Wiarton Willie is coming to the defence of its furry forecaster.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula, which includes the community of Wiarton, has issued a statement saying Willie is "still a valued prognosticator" despite grumblings about his accuracy.

The famous rodent did not see his shadow on Groundhog Day, indicating it would be an early spring, but some in his hometown beg to differ.

Early spring?

Willie's American counterpart Punxsutawney Phil came under fire this week when a lawyer threatened to take him to court over his inaccurate forecast.

Mayor John Close says the weather has been normal, but expectations are high following last year's balmy March. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mayor John Close of Wiarton, Ont., listens to Willie. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Supreme Court sets rules on text-message interception

Privacy rights. Special wiretap orders needed before police can intercept texts, not ordinary search warrants

Police need special wiretap orders — not just ordinary search warrants — to intercept cellphone text messages as part of criminal investigations, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled Wednesday.

In a 5-2 split decision, the court sided with wireless carrier Telus by agreeing that text messaging is essentially another form of conversation and should receive the same protection to which private communications are entitled under the Criminal Code.

"Text messaging is, in essence, an electronic conversation," Justice Rosalie Abella wrote for the majority of the court.

"Technical differences inherent in new technology should not determine the scope of protection afforded to private communications.

"The only practical difference between text messaging and traditional voice communications is the transmission process. This distinction should not take text messages outside the protection to which private communications are entitled." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ruling

"We see it as a robust vindication of privacy rights in the digital age."
Abby Deshman of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association

The Supreme Court says texting should receive the same protection as private communications. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Government of Saskatchewan

Liberal race. Harper, Mulcair pandering to 'fringes': Trudeau

With the finish line in sight, Justin Trudeau took his Liberal leadership bid to the financial heartland on Wednesday, accusing both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and NDP Leader Tom Mulcair of pandering to political extremism.

"We have two parties that are ideologically based around the fringes," Trudeau said. "Where the Liberal party needs to be focused on is the actual large mass of Canadians ... who are not driven by a specific polarizing issue."

Justin Trudeau
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Robocalls

Report calls for harsher punishments

Elections Canada is seeking greater powers to punish anyone caught impersonating one of its officials in the wake of the robocalls affair.

The agency released a report on Wednesday into false or misleading calls made during the last federal election.

The report urges the government to create a new offence that includes hefty fines and jail time for anyone caught pretending to be an Elections Canada official.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Muzzling complaints spark debate among Tory MPs

Conservative MP Mark Warawa gets set to appear before the Commons house affairs committee on Wednesday in Ottawa. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ottawa. There is concern PM's desire to keep abortion issue closed is trumping freedom of debate

Conservative MPs are grappling with the issue of party control and freedom of speech in Parliament after a handful of their colleagues complained they're being muzzled.

The subject was discussed at the weekly caucus meeting, but there appeared to be no resolution.

Vancouver-area MP Mark Warawa has complained to the Speaker of the House of Commons that his right to make statements on a subject of his choice before question period has been stifled.

Some MPs sided with Warawa, while others suggested he was offside.

"A member should be able to make a statement on any issue they think is important to themselves or their constituencies," said Tory MP Kyle Seeback. "Mr. Warawa's (member's statement) should not have been taken away."

Alberta Tory MP Leon Benoit, who had originally backed Warawa's complaint before the Speaker, suggested that some measure of peace had been achieved at the weekly meeting.

"We had a really good caucus meeting, and the prime minister's as usual shown good leadership and I appreciate that," Benoit said. "He's a great leader. It was a good discussion."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"A member should be able to make a statement on any issue."

Kyle Seeback, Conservative MP

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1.4M viewers. Student's anti-rape video packs a surprise in the punchline

Nineteen-year-old Samantha Stendal's anti-rape video was simple, short and sweet.

And her message has captured 1.4 million viewers in just five days.

Stendal, a second-year University of Oregon film major, decided to make the video titled A Needed Response because of the coverage of the Steubenville, Ohio, rape trial.

In Stendal's 26-second video, a woman is passed out on a couch and a guy in front of her leers at the camera, "Guess what I'm gonna do to her?"

The result is not what you'd expect:

The guy fetches a pillow, a blanket and a glass of water and then says, "Real men treat women with respect."

Stendal, events co-ordinator of the University Film Organization, said she made her first YouTube video because she was upset that one of the first questions about that rape case has been "what the victim could have done differently."

Two Steubenville High School football players were convicted on March 17 of raping a 16-year-old girl who was passed out at a party.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"Guess what I'm gonna do to her?"

Leering guy in A Needed Response video as he looks at a woman passed out on a couch. But then he springs a surprise by bringing her a pillow and a blanket.

Safe Sites

Free condoms rile university

A Massachusetts university is threatening disciplinary action against students who distribute condoms out of their dorm rooms.

Boston College is demanding an end to student-run Safe Sites, a network of dorm rooms where free contraceptives are available.

The university says the distribution of condoms is a violation of the facility's Roman Catholic values.

An American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts lawyer says Boston College may be violating student rights.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health

Probe pinpoints new cancer risks

A huge international operation has uncovered dozens of new DNA signposts that can reveal a person's risk for breast, ovarian or prostate cancer.

Scientists found 49 new risk markers for breast cancer, 26 for prostate cancer and eight for ovarian cancer.

The operation involved genetic tests on 200,000 people, scientists said.

"This adds another piece to the puzzle," said Harpal Kumar, chief executive of Cancer Research U.K., the charity that funded much of the research.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defense of Marriage Act may soon be dead

Top court drops hints. Justices may toss out law that prevents gay couples from getting benefits that go to married straights

Hoping for a game-changer: Same-sex-marriage supporters rally Wednesday outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., while inside, justices and lawyers debated whether to strike down a law that prevents legally married gay couples from receiving certain federal benefits. MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. Supreme Court appeared late Wednesday to be on the verge of dropping a gay-marriage bombshell.

It indicated it could strike down the law that prevents legally married gay couples from receiving federal benefits that go to married people.

After two days of intense debate, the court wrapped up its arguments over gay marriage in America.

And Justice Anthony Kennedy — often the decisive vote in a divided court — joined the four more liberal justices in raising questions about the provision of the federal Defense of Marriage Act that is being challenged at the Supreme Court.

Kennedy said the law appears to intrude on the power of states that have chosen to recognize same-sex marriages.

Other justices said the law creates what Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg called two classes of marriage.

The federal law affects a range of benefits available to married couples, including tax breaks, survivor benefits and health insurance for the spouses of federal employees.

Lower federal courts have struck down the section of the law that defines marriage as being between one man and one woman.

And now the justices, in nearly two hours of argument, were considering whether to follow suit.

President Barack Obama declared his support for gay marriage during last year's presidential election campaign.

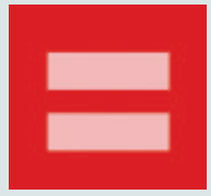
Same-sex marriage is legal in nine states and the District of Columbia, while 12 others recognize "civil unions" or "domestic partnerships" that grant the same benefits without full rights of marriage.

All the other U.S. states ban gay marriage in their constitutions.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New logo

Now gay marriage is in the pink



Bud Light said it with beer cans. Martha Stewart said it with red velvet cake.

Companies and celebrities from Beyoncé to George Takei this week joined millions of social-media users in posting and tweeting a simple red logo in support of gay marriage.

A square box with thick pink horizontal lines (the mathematical equal symbol) was offered for sharing by the Human Rights Campaign.

The image — pictured above — is a makeover of the advocacy group's logo, usually a blue background with bright yellow lines.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Marketing research shows web surfers actually read very little on a page as their eyes dart around their search for something specific. There are lessons in this info for web designers. SCOTT BARBOUR/GETTY IMAGES

Research tracks quick hits of users

Research. Users focus on the first few search results down the page and only about a third of the way horizontally

Ian Everdell knows exactly where people's eyes generally go when browsing a web page, and how women act a little differently than men when it comes to reading online.

If you can even call it reading.

Everdell has it on good authority that Internet users typically aren't really reading at all on most web pages. Their eyes impatiently dart across the screen in search of something specific, or something interesting to pique their attention, but there's not much actual reading going on.

He knows because of the eye-tracking technology at the Toronto office of the marketing company Mediative, where web users sit down to do a little surfing and have their flits of vision recorded and studied.

Web designers can then see what viewers are looking at and what they're not.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Front-end your web prose

"At the beginning of a headline, or a heading, or paragraph, people are seeing at most 12 to 15 characters," said Ian Everdell of Mediative.

- That means that the content of the writing has to be front-ended to catch attention, he said.

BlackBerry

First Z10 sales numbers due

Investors will get a first glimpse Thursday of sales data for BlackBerry's new Z10 touchscreen smartphone.

The Waterloo, Ont.-based company is to report financial results for fiscal 2013 and for the fourth quarter ended March 2 before markets open, with options trades betting that the release will drive the company's stock higher.

BlackBerry's report will capture nearly a month of sales for the Z10, a sleek, multi-tasking handset running on a rebuilt BB10 operating platform that launched first in the U.K. on Jan. 31.

It will include no sales from the U.S., where the platform debuted last Friday.

While most analysts see the numbers from the U.S., BlackBerry's largest single market, as the test of its comeback hopes, some say early data could give the volatile stock a short-term boost.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Internet spam fighter zapped by massive online attack

An Internet watchdog group responsible for keeping ads for counterfeit Viagra and bogus weight-loss pills out of inboxes around the world has been hit by a huge cyber-attack, a crushing electronic onslaught that one expert said has already had ripple effects across the web.

Spam-fighting organization Spamhaus said Wednesday that it had been buffeted by a massive denial-of-service attack since mid-March, apparently from groups angry at being blacklisted by the Geneva-based group.

"It is a small miracle that we're still online," said Spamhaus researcher Vincent Hanna.

Denial-of-service attacks work by overwhelming target servers with traffic.

The attack could be bad news for email users, many of whose incoming messages are checked against Spamhaus's widely used and constantly updated blacklists.

Hanna said that his site had so far managed to stay on top of the spammers, but warned that being knocked offline could give them an opening. The sheer size of the attack has already affected Internet users elsewhere.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Wife-killer case. Court tosses province's claim to life insurance payout

Ontario's Superior Court of Justice has ruled it would be "manifestly harsh" and "clearly not in the interests of justice" to order cash from a murdered woman's life insurance policy to go to the province rather than to the mentally ill husband who killed her.

The case involved Ved Dhingra, who killed his wife Kamlesh in 2006 but was found not criminally responsible due to a mental disorder.

While the court agreed with the province's argument that the life insurance payout claimed by Dhingra was proceeds of unlawful activity, it found it would not be just for Dhingra to forfeit the funds and consequently dismissed the Attorney General's application. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Civil Remedies Act

The Civil Remedies Act, enacted in 2002, aims to prevent criminals from profiting from wrongdoing.

- It does not exempt a person found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder.

Unscheduled landing

Boozy passenger disrupts flight

An Air Transat flight from Vancouver to the United Kingdom had to make an unscheduled landing in Nunavut because of a drunken and unruly passenger.

RCMP said the plane was diverted early Wednesday to the territorial capital of Iqaluit because the 39-year-old man was belligerent and acting aggressively.

He had to be restrained by flight attendants and other passengers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cop killer found not criminally responsible

Mental illness. Three psychiatrists testified man was psychotic at the time he killed Toronto officer while on snowplow rampage

A man who killed a Toronto police officer with a snowplow showed no emotion Wednesday when he was found not criminally responsible.

Jurors reached the verdict in the trial of Richard Kachkar, 46, in the third day of deliberations.

The verdict means the jury believed Kachkar couldn't appreciate what he was doing when he hit and killed Sgt. Ryan Russell, 35, on Jan. 12, 2011, because he was mentally ill.

People who are found not criminally responsible are sent to mental-health facilities for an indeterminate period of time and can be released only when a review board finds they aren't a significant threat to public safety.

But the judge in the case still allowed Russell's family to deliver victim-impact statements.

Speaking directly to Kachkar, Russell's father Glenn said Kachkar had smashed his family into pieces.

"You have no idea how much grief and pain you have caused," he said. "When you ran my son down with that plow and left him bleeding to death in the snow, a large part of myself died."

The judge had told the jury there was "no doubt" Kachkar was driving the stolen snowplow, but what the jury had to consider was his mental state.

The man from St. Catharines, Ont., drove the plow around the city, hitting vehicles and crossing into oncoming traffic. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A man who killed Toronto police Sgt. Ryan Russell, pictured, with a snowplow has been found not criminally responsible. TORONTO POLICE SERVICE

A funny thing happens when you tell kids they matter. They believe you.

An alarming 40,000 kids drop out of high school every year. Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada are committed to changing that. They provide a safe and supportive place where kids can develop confidence and life skills. They offer programs like *Rogers Raising the Grade*™ to help kids with their studies. The Club is a place where kids can drop in, so they're less likely to drop out.

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Yoga pants recall

No need to bend over: Lululemon

Lululemon said Wednesday that no demonstrations of yoga or any other positions are needed to return the pricey black yoga pants that the company pulled from shelves last week after finding they were too sheer.

"We do not require guests to demonstrate the sheerness of their bottoms," said Sari Martin, who works for communications firm ICR and spoke on behalf of Lululemon.

The statement comes a day after the New York Post recounted one woman's tale of being asked by sales staff to bend over to prove the pants she was trying to return were sheer. Martin would not comment on the specific instance recounted by the Post, but said this is not standard policy for Lululemon staffers.

To the contrary, she said that people who bought the black Luon yoga pants since March 1, either online or in store, can return them for a full refund, "no questions asked." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

February inflation shows biggest jump in over 2 decades

Inflation shock. Hike in gasoline prices fuelled month-to-month rise — but figure is likely to be viewed as an anomaly

A steep increase in gasoline prices from January to February helped drive up consumer prices in Canada by a surprisingly strong 1.2 per cent. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Consumer prices in Canada jumped by a surprisingly strong 1.2 per cent in February as a big hike in gasoline helped fuel the biggest month-to-month pop in inflation since January 1991 when Ottawa debuted the GST.

The one-month increase lifted the Canadian annual inflation rate by 0.7 point, also to 1.2 per cent, reversing a trend that had reduced annual inflation to 0.5 per cent in January, the lowest in more than three years.

Economists had expected inflation to start edging up, particularly as gasoline prices were known to have risen, but their best estimate was for a year-to-year increase of 0.8 per cent and a month-to-month increase of 0.7 per cent.

Despite the one-month inflation shock, analysts said Canadians had little to worry about and that the Bank of Canada will likely discount the report as an anomaly.

Derek Holt, vice-president of economics with Scotia Capital, noted the steep increase in gasoline prices from January to February — 8.4 per cent — is not being repeated in March. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NADbank. 1.6M Canadians read Metro every day

The numbers are in — according to the latest NADbank newspaper research, 1.6 million Canadians from Halifax to Vancouver reach for a Metro newspaper every morning to find out what happened in their communities and around the globe while they slept, an increase of nine per cent over last year.

Every week, 3.9 million Canadians turn to their Metro for the latest news, an increase of 16 per cent. And that's only part of the story.

Metro Canada's total brand footprint — print, digital paper, website and news app — has reached a record 1.8 million daily readers and 4.1 million weekly readers.

"We've heard lots of chatter about the death of newspapers," says Bill McDonald, president of Metro English Canada. "But the truth is, more Canadians than ever before are turning to newspapers across all their platforms, and the growth has been driven by a combination of free dailies and digital properties.

"Our readers — active metropolitans — expect news, information and entertainment from the paper, the app and online, and these numbers tell us we're delivering on that expectation." METRO

Market Minute

DOLLAR
98.38¢
(-0.01¢)

TSX 12,699.65 (-6.73)

OIL $96.58 US (+24¢)

GOLD $1,606.20 US (+$10.50)

Natural gas: $4.08 US (+ 9¢)
Dow Jones: 14,526.16 (-33.49)

Disasters cost $78B in insurance losses: Firm

The world's second-largest reinsurer says natural catastrophes and man-made disasters cost the insurance industry about $78 billion in 2012, the third costliest year on record.

Swiss Re says the more than 300 catastrophes and disasters, which caused the loss of 14,000 lives, were mostly due to "large-scale weather events" in the United States such as Superstorm Sandy. Sandy accounted for $35.6 billion of insured losses — nearly half the total worldwide.

Homes wrecked by Superstorm Sandy are pictured on Oct. 31, 2012, in Seaside Heights, N.J. GETTY IMAGES FILE

But the Zurich-based firm noted in a statement Wednesday the losses were well down from 2011, when record earthquakes and flooding in Asia Pacific region caused the highest-ever recorded losses of more than $128 billion.

Kurt Karl, Swiss Re's chief economist, says "large parts of the globe that are prone to weather extremes" were uninsured. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Storm damage

$35.6B

Superstorm Sandy accounted for $35.6 billion of insured losses, nearly half the worldwide total in 2012.

HEY FANS, CAN I HITCH A RIDE?

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Forgive me, true blue Blue Jays fans, for I have sinned. It has been 20 years since my last celebration. But this Prodigal Fan has returned, contrite, and ready to brush the home plate clean. I'm sorry.

I feel bad because I haven't cheered on the Jays since I was a teenager, way back when a major-league team could win a baseball championship without spending enough money to bail out Cyprus.

Twenty years ago, the Jays had an unusual nickname for a Toronto team: "Winners." But after peaking in the early 1990s, the team settled into a couple of decades of mediocrity, like the baseball equivalent of The Simpsons, and I emphatically leapt from the bandwagon. Sorry.

Fast forward all the way to this off-season and the Blue Jays are finally expected to soar, because of a little thing called heart. Also: 70 googelty-gillion dollars, give or take. If you took all the $100 bills the Blue Jays have spent this off-season on new players and placed them end to end, you could flog a bunch of man-servants and order them to push the money into a big pile for you to swim in. That's how much money it is.

When I saw that the team was serious about winning, I jumped back on the Jays bandwagon and bought a 20-ticket package. I feel guilty about it, but try to understand that this bandwagon has cool-looking spoilers and fancy rims and a lift kit that bounces to the bass of the OK, Blue Jays song. I'm so sorry.

Here's why I feel so guilty: As the frequent readers of this column know, I am a die-hard hockey fan of the sort who can tell you exactly where I was May 10, 1970, when Bobby Orr sailed through the air after scoring the Stanley Cup-winning goal for my Boston Bruins. That's right: I didn't exist yet.

So, bad example. But the point is I know when it happened, I know who passed him the puck, I know who the goalie was, and I can name most of the team that fell on top of him even though I didn't start cheering for the logo on the sweater until two decades later. I live and breathe the Boston Bruins. Wins improve my mood, losses sting like a puck in the shins.

The Blue Jays? Well, as I was writing this a friend asked me if I would join a fantasy baseball league. I laughed because I know nothing. To me, fantasy baseball is running the bases in slow motion and making out with Scarlett Johansson when I reach home plate.

Hence my guilt: I feel like I haven't earned the right to call myself a baseball fan. I haven't learned enough, and I haven't suffered enough.

But, in the end, that's why I decided to commit to baseball fandom. Because after a quarter-century of making myself sick, stressed, angry or distraught over hockey, I thought I'd try a sport where I can just relax and enjoy the game.

I know enough to have fun. I'm aware that about 20 years ago, a player named Joe Carter hit a home run to win the World Series and leapt around the bases like he was 10. If someone on the new team could do that this year, that'd be swell.

I'll have a fine view from the bandwagon.

ZOOM

My sand, my preciousss

MATT CARDY/GETTY IMAGES

For Gollum, life's a beach

Sand sculptor Radovan Zivny works on a sand sculpture of Gollum, a character from J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings.

This striking work is part of this year's Hollywood-themed annual Sand Sculpture festival in Weston-Super-Mare, England, due to open to the public on Good Friday.

Zivny, who has been sand sculpting for 15 years, uses basic implements to craft his works: A shovel, trowels, spatulas and a spoon. But the main challenge arises from how compact the sand is.

For the artist, sand sculpting at Weston-Super-Mare is for the most part just about "building an amusing park," he said. METRO WORLD NEWS

Lord of the Sand

"My work Gollum is all about expression, obsession and a sense of schizophrenia. I went for Gollum because he is a very unique character and has an interesting split personality. I think I managed to express him well enough."

Radovan Zivny, 39, sculptor and graphic designer from the Czech Republic. The festival began in 2006 and has grown every year. The sculptures, which this year include Harry Potter, Batman, Yoda and more, take about two weeks to build.
Visit metronews.ca and check out our photo gallery.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Since we spend more time stuck in stupid real life than we do enjoying international tourist traps, it's up to webcams to allow us to live vicariously through them. Here are some streaming looks at some of the world's more unusual tourist spots.

Abbey Road

What's more entertaining than the persistent traffic-halting parade of people recreating a certain iconic album cover? Watching locals trying their best to politely dodge them. Click on abbeyroad.com/crossing.

Panama Canal

A man, a plan, a canal and a webcam. Obviously, this unfolds at a leisurely pace, but checking in from time to time makes an impressive montage. Go to pancanal.com and click the multimedia tab.

Shibuya Crossing

Since my own attempts at filming a stroll across Tokyo's notoriously crowded scramble crossing ended up looking like Cloverfield, this is where I go to relive it. Visit goandroam.com, click Tokyo and then Shibuya street cam.

Tweets

@metropicks asked: A man got $8K for the "pain" of listening to a Disney song over and over. What's your nightmare repeat song?

@Jer_Godfrey: my nightmare songs - barney theme song or anything from justin beiber!

@BrynnELangille: Mmm bop- Hanson

@mmmhustler403: I Knew You Were Trouble by Taylor Swift gave me a headache.

@hammertime9909: Bennie and the jets, no question about it. #benniebenniebennieben

Synopsis

Based on Hasbro's G.I. Joe toys and comics, Retaliation sees the G.I. Joe squad — Duke (Channing Tatum). Roadblock (Dwayne Johnson), Flint (D.J. Cotrona) and Lady Jaye (Adrianne Palicki) — framed for treason. Shut down by order of the president (Jonathan Pryce) they team with a rogue general, Joseph Colton (Bruce Willis), to battle venomous international terrorist organization Cobra and super villain Zartan (Arnold Vosloo).

- Richard: ●●○○○
- Mark: ●○○○○

Channing Tatum and Dwayne Johnson flex their muscles in G.I. Joe: Retaliation. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE AND MARK BRESLIN

A real American no-no

Retaliation. Second instalment of the G.I. Joe series beats the tar out of viewers

Richard: Mark, I enjoyed watching GI Joe: Retaliation, but it wasn't the movie I thought it would be. It was written by the people who did Zombieland, so I expected a higher laugh to body count ratio. I didn't think it would be Zero Dark Funny or anything, but every now and again it would tease me with a line like, "They call it a water board, but I never got bored," that made me wish for more belly laughs and fewer bullets. What did you think?

Mark: The spirit of Michael Bay hangs over this movie like a shroud, suffocating it with inane plotting, cardboard characters and meth lab editing. I thought I disliked the first G.I. Joe but this one makes the original look like Citizen Kane. No wonder Charming Tater, or whatever his name is, had the smarts to limit his scenes to his contractual obligations only.

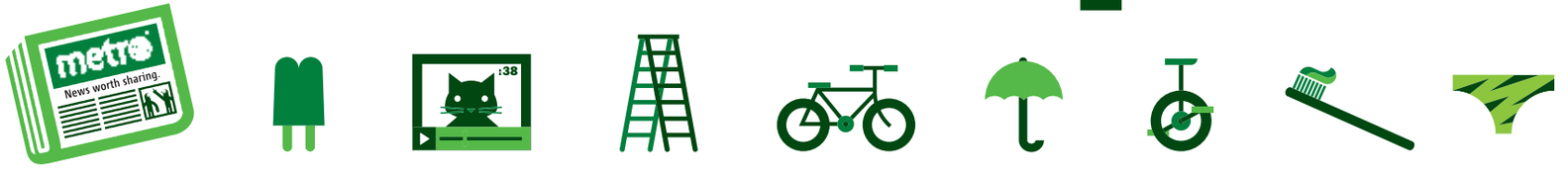
RC: This one makes the assumption that the audience has read the comics and knows the mythology surrounding the Joes (all you really need to know is that "Joes" rhymes with "heroes"), Cobra (the bad guys) and the various ninjas. That's where this movie lost me, story wise. I was glad the ninjas were there — there's a wild ninja chase in the middle of the movie — but their backstory muddies things up. Remind me again, is Storm Shadow a good guy or a bad guy?

MB: Couldn't tell. Same with the ninjas. They have a great scene on a mountain, though, the best in the movie. But otherwise, the film just crowds in as much action as possible, and hopes we'll find Jonathan Pryce as dastardly as he thinks he is. The rest of the cast seems a bit stunned by the plot, even The Rock, although Bruce Willis is a welcome arrival midway through. But it's like putting a fine béarnaise sauce on a rancid flank steak. In glorious 3D.

RC: I liked it more than you. I was content to sit back and watch things explode — the little flying bug bombs are cool — and watch The Rock flex his muscles, but I did feel the action scenes, while plentiful, were shot so that it was often difficult to tell who was beating the tar out of who.

MB: Me either, but in the end, I felt the movie was beating the tar out of me.

Sharability



Keep your chin up, Jay.
We've got plenty of jobs up here.

Search more than 6,000 new job postings added every week.

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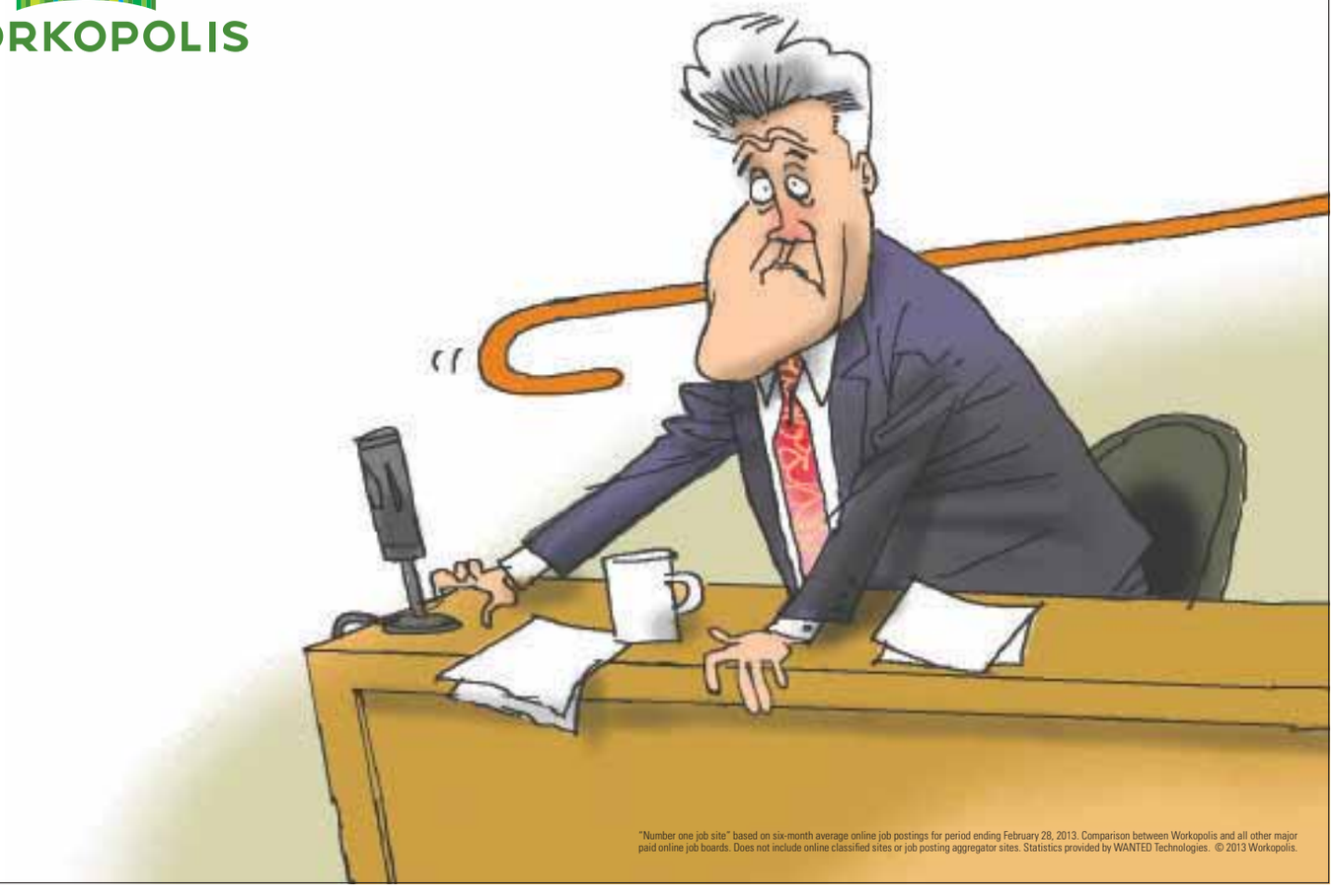
WORKOPOLIS



"Number one job site" based on six-month average online job postings for period ending February 28, 2013. Comparison between Workopolis and all other major paid online job boards. Does not include online classified sites or job posting aggregator sites. Statistics provided by WANTED Technologies. © 2013 Workopolis.

Cinema. In the mood for the sinister?

There was a time when edgy, new exciting indie horror films would almost always find homes in movie theatres. Cineplex's Front Row Centre Events and Raven Banner Distribution is celebrating that time with their adventurous Sinister Cinema series, a monthly program that places four unique art-house horror films into 25 theatres across Canada.

The Sinister Cinema series kicks off with John Dies at the End. HANDOUT

John Dies at the End (March 27)
Phantasm mastermind Don Coscarelli's utterly mad meditation on a drug called soy sauce that gives its addicts a euphoric, dimensional travelling high and then promptly turns many of them into monsters. Based on David Wong's equally demented novel, John stars genre star Clancy Brown and heavy hitter Paul Giamatti and is about as fevered and unclassifiable a film as it gets.

The Last Will and Testament of Rosalind Leigh (May 9)
Toronto horror hero Rodrigo Gudino (founder of Canadian genre magazine Rue Morgue) delivers a slow, strange supernatural drama about an antiques collector whose late mother's home is actually a shrine to an angelic cult. The immortal Vanessa Redgrave provides a supporting role.

American Mary (May 30)
From the social networking heroines The Soska Sisters comes this audacious, twisted and blackly comic thriller. In it Ginger Snaps star Katherine Isabelle plays a troubled med student who gets sucked into the perverse world of underground plastic surgery.

No One Lives (June 19)
Director Ryuhei Kitamura (Versus, Midnight Meat Train) delivers a gory and engrossing thriller where good and evil simply do not exist. There's only bad people and well, badder people. When a gang of thugs discover a crime scene witness in a jacked car, they think she'll be worth a pretty penny. Until they learn that the young woman in question is far from innocent.

CHRIS ALEXANDER, MWN

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., MAR. 29 TO THURS., APR. 4 . TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

Cineplex Odeon Centre 3510 8th St. East

21 and Over (14A) Fri-Mon 12:15-2:45-5:15-7:35-10 Tue-Thu 2:45-5:15-7:35-10
The Croods 3D (G) No Passes Fri-Mon 12:25-2:50-5:25-7:50-10:20 No Passes Tue-Thu 1:55-4:20-6:50-9:30
Escape From Planet Earth (G) Fri-Mon 12:05-2:20-4:40 Tue-Thu 2:15-4:25
G.I. Joe: Retaliation 3D (PG) No Passes Fri-Mon 12-2:35-5:10-7:45-10:30 No Passes Tue-Thu 1:50-4:40-7:20-10:15
Identity Thief (14A) Fri-Mon 2-4:45-7:25-10:10 Tue-Thu 2:05-4:45-7:25-10:10
Oz the Great and Powerful (PG) Fri-Mon 1-3:55-6:55-9:55 Tue 1-4:05-6:55-9:55 Wed 4:05-6:55-9:55 Thu 1-4:05-6:55-9:55 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Safe Haven (PG) Fri-Mon 7:05-9:50 Tue-Thu 6:40-9:25
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri-Thu 1:25-4:10-7-9:40

Galaxy Cinemas Saskatoon 347 2nd Ave. South

Admission (PG) Fri 12:15-2:50-5:25-8:05-10:35 Sat 11:10-5:25-8:05-10:35 Sun-Mon 12:15-2:50-5:25-8:05-10:35 Tue-Thu 2:25-5:05-7:35-10:05
The Call (14A) Fri-Mon 1:05-3:30-5:55-8:20-10:45 Tue-Thu 2:45-5:20-8-10:20
The Croods (G) No Passes Fri 1:40-4:10-6:55-9:30 No Passes Sat 11:15-1:40-4:10-6:55-9:30 No Passes Sun-Mon 1:40-4:10-6:55-9:30 No Passes Tue-Thu 1:40-4:15-6:45-9:30
The Croods 3D (G) No Passes Fri-Mon 12:10-2:35-5:10-7:30-10:05 No Passes Tue-Wed 2:35-5:15-7:40-10:10 No Passes Thu 2:35-5:15-7:40-10:25
Esmeralda Encore Presentation - Bolshoi Ballet (STC) Sun 12:55
Evil Dead (18A) Thu 10
G.I. Joe: Retaliation 3D (PG) No Passes Fri 1:55-4:35-7:20-10:15 No Passes Sat 11:20-1:55-4:35-7:20-10:15 No Passes Sun-Mon 1:55-4:35-7:20-10:15 No Passes Tue-Thu 1:10-4:05-7-10 No Passes Fri-Mon 12-2:40-5:20-8-10:45 No Passes Tue-Thu 1:45-4:45-7:45-10:30
The Host (PG) Fri-Mon 12:55-4-7-9:55 Tue-Thu 12:55-4-7:05-9:55
The Incredible Burt Wonderstone (PG) Fri-Sat 12:40-3:15-5:40-8:10-10:40 Sun 5:40-8:10-10:40 Mon 12:40-3:15-5:40-8:10-10:40 Tue 1:30-4:20-6:50-9:50 Wed 1:30-4:20-10:25 Thu 1:30-4:20-6:50-9:50
Jack the Giant Slayer 3D (PG) Fri-Mon 2:05-5-7:45-10:30 Tue 2:05-4:55-7:55-10:30 Wed-Thu 2:05-4:55-7:55
Olympus Has Fallen (14A) Fri 1:50-4:40-7:30-10:25 Sat 11:05-1:50-4:40-7:30-10:25 Sun-Thu 1:50-4:40-7:30-10:25
Oz the Great and Powerful (PG) Fri-Thu 1
Oz the Great and Powerful 3D (PG) Fri-Mon 7:10-10:20 Tue-Thu 3:50-7:15-10:15 Fri-Mon 3:55
Spring Breakers (18A) Fri-Mon 12:50-3:10-5:30-7:50-10:10 Tue-Thu 2:30-5-7:20-9:45
Spy Kids (G) Sat 11
The Ten Commandments (STC) Sat 12:30 Wed 6:30

Roxy Theatre 320 20th St West

Django Unchained (14A) Fri-Mon 3:45 Tue-Thu 9
Donnie Darko (STC) Sat 11:30
A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III (PG) Fri-Mon 3-7:15 Tue-Thu 7:15
John Dies at the End (14A) Fri-Mon 5-9:15 Tue-Thu 9:15
On the Road (14A) Fri-Mon 1:10-9:10
Quartet (PG) Fri-Mon 1-7 Tue-Thu 7

Rainbow Cinemas Saskatoon The Centre at Circle & 8th

Beautiful Creatures (PG) Fri-Thu 1:15-7:05
Bullet to the Head (14A) Fri-Thu 4:30-10
Dead Man Down (14A) Fri-Thu 1:05-7:15-9:55
A Good Day to Die Hard (14A) Fri-Thu 2-4:35-7:25-9:40
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (PG) Fri-Thu 7:45
Life of Pi (G) Fri-Thu 1-4-7-9:45
Parental Guidance (G) Fri 1:35-4:25-7:10 Sat-Sun 11:10-1:35-4:25-7:10 Mon-Thu 1:35-4:25-7:10
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri 1:40-4:20-7:20 Sat-Sun 11:20-1:40-4:20-7:20 Mon-Thu 1:40-4:20-7:20
Snitch (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-4:10-9:35
Warm Bodies (PG) Fri-Thu 4:15-9:50
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri 1:20-4:05-6:50 Sat-Sun 11-1:20-4:05-6:50 Mon-Thu 1:20-4:05-6:50
Zero Dark Thirty (14A) Fri-Thu 9:15

Visit metronews.ca/bestnewproducts to learn about Canada's

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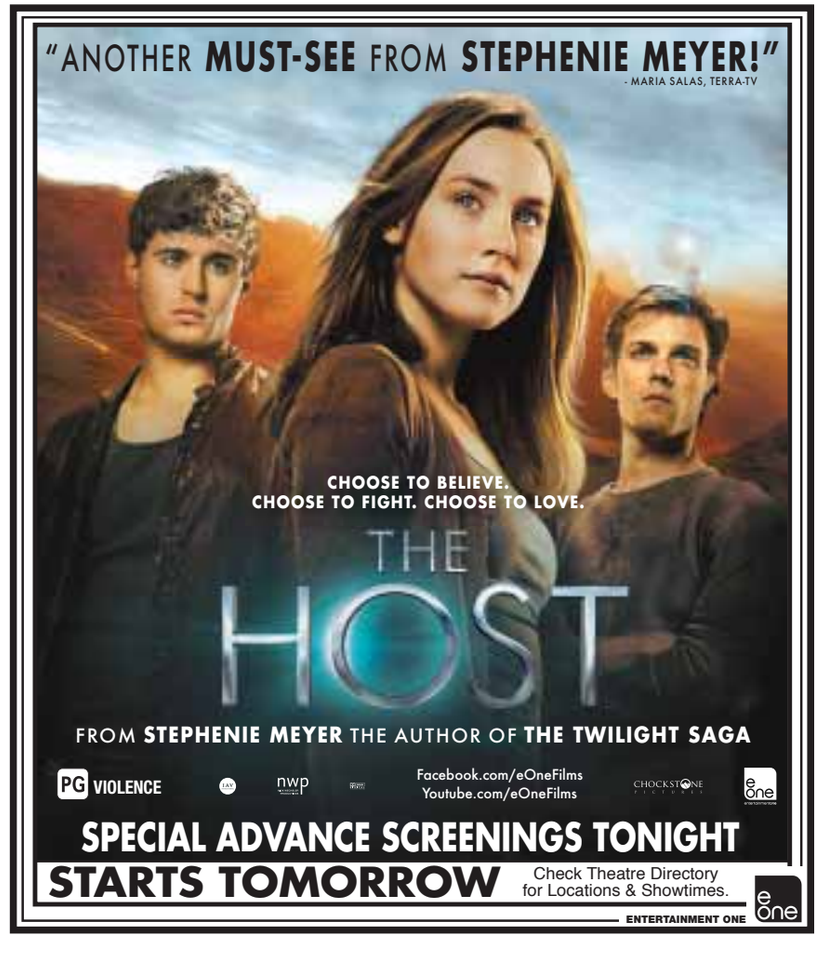
Try a winner at Walmart!

We invite you to come and try some of the 2013 Best New Product Award winners* in select Walmart stores across Canada between April 4th and 7th. Visit see.walmart.ca/BNPA for dates, times and locations.**

*Based on national study by BrandSpark International. Winners chosen from select new products in Canada between November 8th, 2012 – December 16th, 2012. For more information visit www.bestnewproductawards.biz
**Dates subject to change. While quantities last.

Available at Walmart



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Music videos from the fringe that are too hot for television

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

The cool thing about the Internet is that bands get to make videos that would have a hard time making it on TV.

Diane Young/ Vampire Weekend

Wherein the band greatly annoys Saab fans by torching some perfectly good cars.

Bad MF/Biting Elbows

When I posted this video from this unknown band on my website, traffic exploded. You've never, ever seen anything like this before. (Violence and coarse language! Definitely NSFW.)

Bohemian Rhapsody/ Puscifer

Weirdly cool—and more than just a little disturbing. In the absence of a new Tool album, I guess Maynard James Keenan needs to do something, although I'm not sure what Freddie Mercury would think.

Mind the App

Pinball wizards from the dark side

Star Wars Pinball
iPhone/iPad/Android
$1.99

Pinball machines and Star Wars movies share an exhilaration of sights and sounds in this fun arcade simulation where light sabers redirect silver balls that escape Darth Vader's crushing grasp.

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
scene@metronews.ca

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Hayden Panettiere. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Hayden Panettiere engaged to Klitschko?

Hayden Panettiere has secretly gotten engaged to her Ukrainian boxer beau, Wladimir Klitschko, according to Us Weekly.

"Very few people know, and she isn't wearing her ring publicly yet," a source says. "Looks like a summer wedding."

Panettiere and Klitschko split up in 2011 after two years of dating, and they have not officially confirmed they are back together, despite several public displays of affections over the past few months.

The Word

Jon Hamm wants you to stop talking about his package

THE WORD
Meredith Engel
scene@metronews.ca

Jon Hamm is growing tired of the attention his private parts have been receiving.

"Most of it's tongue-in-cheek, but it is a little rude," he tells Rolling Stone of the photos spread online of his crotch.

"They're called 'privates' for a reason. I'm wearing pants. Lay off."

Of course, the Mad Men star doesn't want to come off as a complainer.

"I mean ... There are harder jobs in the world," he says. "But when people feel the freedom to create Tumblr accounts... I feel like that wasn't part of the deal. But whatever. I guess it's better than being called out for the opposite."

Exactly. Better than the alternative, Hamm. We could be talking about your Hammapillar.

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SEE WHAT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN AT BOUNCEFRESH.CA

Joel McHale

McHale has no interest in hosting Oscars

Joel McHale doesn't expect to be hosting the Oscars next year, even if his fans think he's be perfect for the difficult gig.

"They're not going to call me," McHale said during an interview with Larry King, responding to a fan-submitted question about whether he'd entertain the thought of hosting the Academy Awards. "Would I entertain the thought? I just entertained it. I was very entertained. So was the thought. The thought was like, 'This was a great time.'"

Sean Penn's son gets into fight with photographer

Sean Penn's 18-year-old son, Hopper, is proving to be just as much of a fan of the paparazzi as his dad, reportedly getting physical with a photographer outside a Beverly Hills building, according to TMZ.

Sean Penn.

The photographer claims he and Hopper argued before the young man shoved him. But while the photographer reportedly showed police footage of the incident when they arrived on the scene, he declined to press charges.

Twitter

@SteveMartinToGo
I hope to go down in history with this historic Tweet. Yes, the one you are reading right now. It's got it all.

@kirstiealley
my timeline is broken... ouch

@lenadunham
Just turned around and my dog was opening an Amazon box. So, friends and family, great knowing you but it seems we have it covered here.

Justin Bieber

Did Bieber lay a beat down?

Justin Bieber is facing battery accusations made by a neighbour who claims the singer made threats during an argument near his Los Angeles-area home, according to E! News. No further details of Bieber's supposed behaviour were made available.

While no arrests were made or injuries reported, the L.A. Sheriff's Department is investigating the accusation.

"Everyone that we will need to talk to, we will talk to," a spokesman says. Bieber was stopping home in California this week between stops on his European tour.

Spring into a male makeover

Fashion. The change in the seasons brings a combination of classic staples and new trends, including suede, splashes of colour and blue suits

The wealth of fashion choices for men this spring will blow your mind—and your closet. ISTOCK

Men will soon be packing away the parkas and shelving heavy sweaters to make way for spring styles — and they'd be wise to leave plenty of closet space.

"I find menswear right now the best it's ever been. It's just more exciting, fun, colourful," says Melissa Austria, founder of Toronto menswear boutique Gotstyle.

While menswear doesn't change as rapidly as womenswear, it remains rooted in the classic staples — albeit with a twist, notes Shannon Stewart, assistant general merchandise manager for Harry Rosen.

"The polo is a great example. It's been around for decades and decades and we keep reinventing it really through colour and through silhouette," Stewart says.

Whether you're a fashion-forward fella or a style neophyte, Austria and Stewart have some tips on ways men can spring forward with their seasonal wardrobe.

1. Rainbow brights. It's not just flashes of colour in neckties, pocket squares, socks and collared shirts: a rainbow full of saturated shades are brightening up all facets of menswear.

"The overriding theme for the season is the sheer amount of colour," says Stewart. "Even from a psychological point of view, it just has an impact on a person. It instantly lifts their mood — and it can instantly lift a wardrobe."

Austria says the colours span the spectrum from reds to brighter greens to blues, oranges and yellows.

"It's a more toned-down silhouette. So, it's going to be a toned-down (coloured) chino that you're going to wear with a crisp white shirt. It's going to be a polo shirt that you're going to wear with dark jeans," she says. "It doesn't have to be that intimidating for guys."

Colourful patterns are also in the mix for spring, with smaller-scale houndstooth print, finer stripes and smaller grid checks in shirting, notes Austria.

While some men may have no qualms about donning pants in a bold hue or pairing a variety of shades within one look, both Austria and Stewart say more style-shy guys should start by opting for one core coloured piece.

Unsure of which shade to select? Stewart recommends blue, which she says is a "go-to colour" for many men.

"If they stay in that colour family of blues but maybe go a little bit lighter or a little bit more punchier with the blue, it's a simple way of just taking the blue up a notch from the usual navy or denim blue."

2. Tie one on. Bow ties are broadening beyond tuxedos and geek chic as a sleek alternative to neckties awash in vibrant hues, graphic patterns and even available in reversible varieties.

"Even if a man isn't planning on buying a new suit for the season, through dress shirts and ties ... or bow ties, you can easily freshen up a suit that you may have purchased within the last couple of years," says Stewart.

"We've seen a return to men wearing bow ties which is kind of fun. It's definitely a modern look, you have to be a little bit more confident in it, but it's just a great way to inject a little bit of life into the wardrobe."

Austria says the use of colourful, lighter-weight summer scarves — which has made a splash on the other side of the Atlantic — is poised to make waves closer to home.

"If you go to Europe, they've been showing them for 10, 15 years; and now we're slowly starting to see the guys embrace that in North America," she says.

3. Smart suiting. Austria says formal wear for men is true blue heading into spring after being "grey-driven" for some time. Austria says the new blue is a lighter hue and distinct from the midnight navy and darker shades of the classic colour.

"You can tell that it's blue and it's really fresh," she says. "I just find it more vibrant."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Not just for Pee-wee

"We've seen a return to men wearing bow ties ... It's definitely a modern look, and you have to be a little more confident."

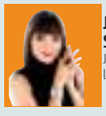
Harry Rosen merchandise manager Shannon Stewart

Fun with footwear

Stewart says its all about suede and colours that pop.

- "It's still breathable, it's a natural material and it adds just a little texture," she says.
- Try a coloured lace or coloured sole for subtler effects.

Twitter



JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

IN THIS HECTIC MODERN WORLD, TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Backstage @WMCFashionWeek with the talented Sunny Fong @ Vawk GREAT collection!

My seder table! Happy Passover! Such a blessing to be with family+friends. But I miss @joeyoneil :(

Back to my "radio" roots! At Astral radio studios recording spots for @EDITbyJeanneB

The Kit

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Adelle
Student
Age: 25

What she's wearing
Deena & Ozzy hat, T. Babaton coat, Lush blazer and collared shirt, BCBG jeans, Casa Blanca boots.

Her inspiration
"Fashion magazines and vintage patterns. I like colour blocking, intertwining old with the new, and dressing comfortable yet sophisticated."

THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT – AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM – AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!

RELIEVE STOMACH PROBLEMS NATURALLY

IBEROGAST COMBINES NINE HERBS THAT HELP SOOTHE DISORDERS

Got a nervous stomach?

Besides trying home remedies, such as sipping mint tea or eating a few plain crackers, one of the newest natural remedies in Canada is an over-the-counter product made in Germany called Iberogast. This herbal remedy combines nine herbs that help relieve various symptoms of reflux and other functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorders.

GI disorders affect millions of people of all ages, according to the International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders. The foundation explains that problems occur when nerves or muscles in the digestive tract or intestines impair function and cause everything from nausea, bloating and discomfort to cramping, heartburn, abdominal pain, and constipation and diarrhea. Diagnosed GI disorders include functional dyspepsia, irritable bowel syndrome, reflux and GERD. But many people experience symptoms periodically and often turn to antacids and other medications.

CONTRIBUTED

"With so many people looking for natural ways to manage their health today, it's worth a try to see if Iberogast will work for you — and most likely it will," says Iberogast spokesperson Garrett Sher.

Iberogast has been used in Europe and around the world for more than 40 years. Clinical studies show that it is safe and effective with no known side-effects. Patients use Iberogast when they are experiencing symptoms (20 drops in a glass of water or juice three times a day) or as a preventative measure for a chronic condition.

The main herb in Iberogast is iberis amara, which helps to soothe muscles in the gastrointestinal tract. It works together with lemon balm leaves, which calm a nervous stomach, peppermint leaves to treat cramping and gas, and chamomile that calms the gastrointestinal tract. Angelica relieves cramping and aids digestion, caraway fruit reduces gas, St. Mary's thistle supports the gastrointestinal tract, and licorice root and celandine treats cramping.

Speak to your doctor if your stomach problems last for more than five days.

DR. OZ WEIGHS IN

Iberogast is one of the worry "cures" for the stomach that were highlighted on a recent Dr. Oz show. "When the stomach is in knots, it's like an antacid, only better," says Dr. Mehmet Oz, a surgeon, author and TV personality, who was first introduced to audiences on Oprah.

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As Seen On Dr. Oz

www.Iberogast.ca

See Your Local Pharmacist Today

Something for every outdoor decorator

For summer. From au naturel to funky brights, outdoor decorating offers up many looks this year

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Whether you are someone who has fallen in love with nature's natural tones or are flipping for colourful brights this summer, there's something for everyone to help decorate the great outdoors.

Well-priced and national availability is what we're going for this week. Enjoy the pickings that are ripe for outdoor summer decorating.

Natural

Picnic basket

Get ready for a speed date with a fully stocked picnic basket for those visits to the park. Ventana Natural Picnic Basket offers a rustic look with trendy chevron weave, $52. **crateandbarrel.com.**

Woven texture candles

Add natural outdoor charm to your table with woven patterns on candles. Natural Woven textures meets beehive with the Brian Gluckstein's Texaline Pillar Candle for Hudson Bay, $8. **thebay.com.**

Brights

Outdoor light

Create night light with Outdoor Cube LED Light. Add a modern touch to your patio. The LED light features many colours and effects. $150. **thebay.com.**

Crocheted apple outdoor pouf

All-weather polypropylene brings casual seating to the patio in a contemporary, hand-crocheted round, perfect for lounging by the pool, $190. **crateandbarrel.com.**

Chevron-patterned rug

Add one of the season's biggest trends to the great outdoors with a Chevron-patterned, hand-hooked polypropylene rug in cream/brown, starting at $129. **sears.ca.**

Cement grey side table

Cool and contemporary style is easy to have. Handcrafted from stone composite and natural fibres, this makes the perfect stool or side table, $180. **cb2.com.**

Indoor/outdoor pillows

Artisan-inspired pillows create trendy pops of colour outside or in, $49-69. **cb2.com.**

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Marble Mocha Cheesecake

This recipe serves 12. MARK SHAPIRO, FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

Easter sweets get a grown-up flavour

ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

Coffee and chocolate go so well with this creamy cheese batter.

You can double this recipe: Bake it in a 10-inch pan and add another 10 minutes to the baking time, baking until the center is still loose.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups chocolate wafer crumbs
- 2 tbsp water
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 2/3 cups smooth light ricotta
- 1/3 cup softened light cream cheese
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup light sour cream or 2% yogurt
- 1 1/2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tsp instant coffee granules
- 2 tsp hot water
- 3 tbsp semi-soft chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vegetable oil

1. Spray an 8-inch springform pan with cooking oil. Preheat the oven to 350 F.

2. For the crust, combine the crumbs, sugar, water and oil. Mix thoroughly. Press into the bottom and up the sides of the prepared springform pan.

3. For the filling, beat the ricotta, cream cheese, sugar, egg, sour cream, flour and vanilla in a large bowl or food processor until well blended. Dissolve the coffee granules in the hot water. Add to the batter and mix until incorporated. Pour the batter over the crust and smooth the top.

4. Place the chocolate chips and oil in a small bowl and microwave on medium high for 30 seconds or just until soft. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the top of the batter. Draw a knife or spatula through the batter several times to create a marbled effect.

5. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes. The centre will be slightly loose when you jiggle the cake.

6. Cool on a rack. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before removing the sides of the pan and serving.

ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN

For your phone

Dash Eggs! (iPad; free)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

Let the Easter Bunny stay for breakfast. Dash magazine's interactive egg recipes include pizza omelets, scrambled slider burgers, sweet whoopee pies, snappy salads, and puppet spoon crafts for the kids.

Springtime pound cake

This recipe serves eight. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp sugar, divided
- 3 navel oranges, peeled and segmented
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup raspberries
- 1 cup quartered strawberries
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh mint
- 8 thick slices purchased or homemade pound cake
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened

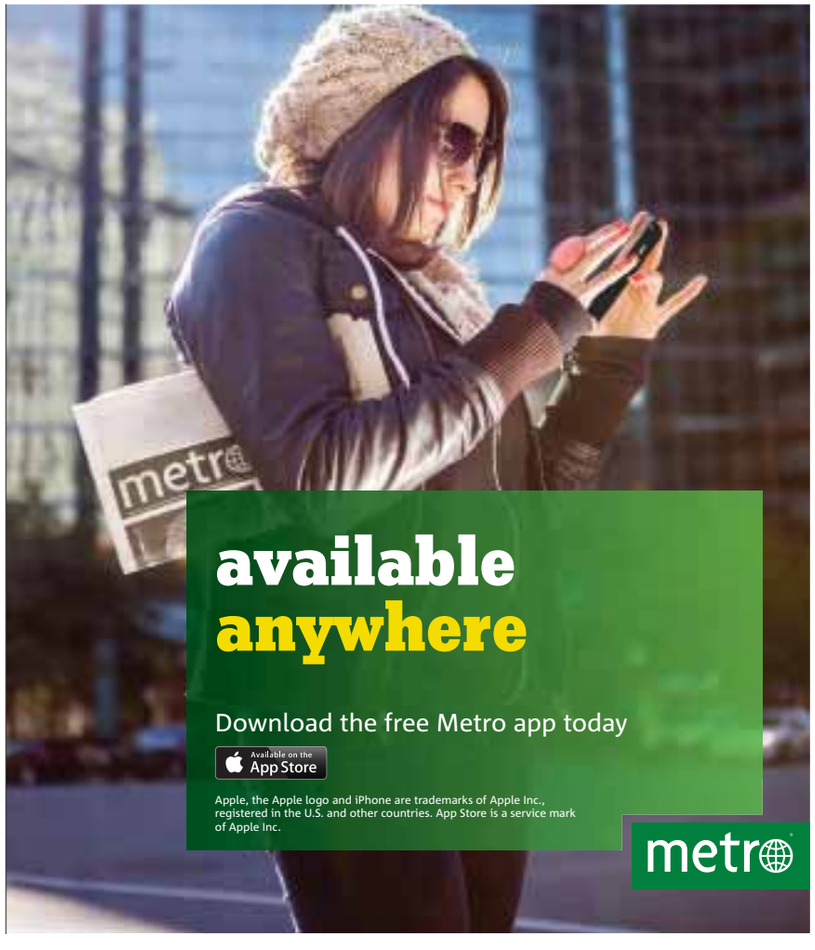
How do you make pound cake even more buttery and delicious? Easy! Pan-sear slices of it with butter and sugar.

If you know how to make a grilled cheese, you can make this dessert, which is a perfect ending to an Easter — or any springtime — dinner. Pan-seared pound cake is decadent and rich, so we've paired it with a fresh, minty fruit salad for balance.

1. In bowl, combine 1 tablespoon of sugar with orange segments, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, lemon juice and mint. Stir gently, then set aside.

2. Spread both sides of each slice of the pound cake with a bit of the butter, lightly coating the surface. Use the remaining tablespoon of sugar to sprinkle over both sides of each slice.

3. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium. Working in batches, toast the cake slices for 3 to 4 minutes per side, or until golden and caramelized. Serve warm and topped with the fruit salad. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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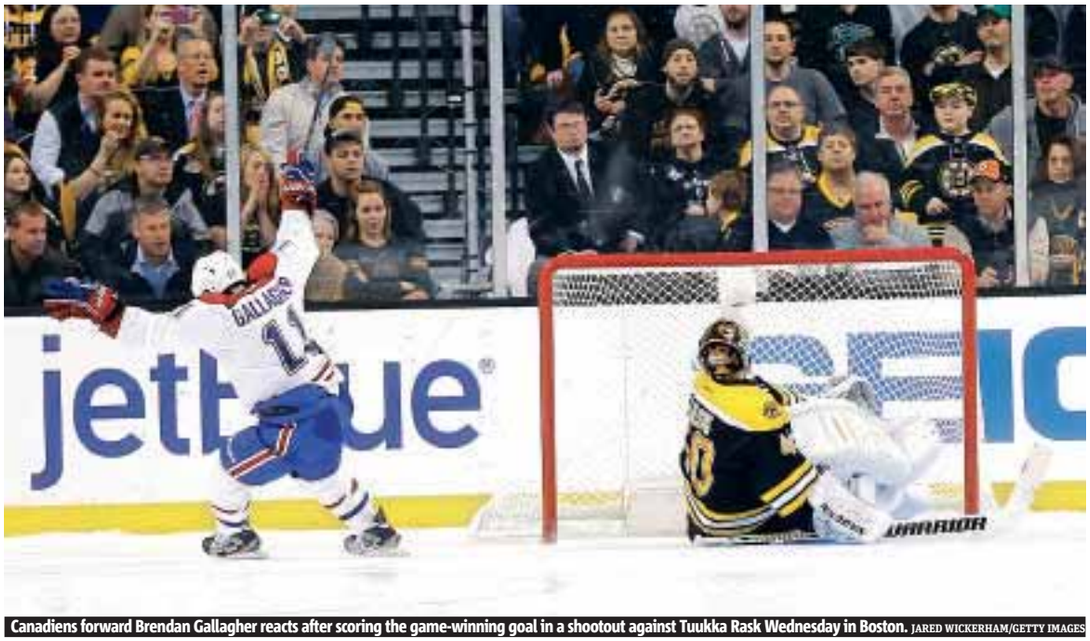


Canadiens forward Brendan Gallagher reacts after scoring the game-winning goal in a shootout against Tuukka Rask Wednesday in Boston. JARED WICKERHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Habs blast past Bruins in shootout

NHL. Markov's late equalizer sends game to extra time as Montreal prevails in shootout in Boston

On Wednesday

Canadiens	Bruins
6	5

Andrei Markov tied it with 8.2 seconds left in regulation, and Brendan Gallagher scored the only shootout goal to give the Montreal Canadiens a 6-5 victory over the Boston Bruins on Wednesday night.

The victory snapped a tie for the second-most points in the Eastern Conference, giving the Canadiens 47. They lead the Northeast Division by a point over the Bruins.

In the shootout, all six Bruins players were stopped. The first five Canadiens couldn't score, either. Then Gallagher put the puck between Tuukka Rask's pads.

It capped a comeback after Boston had taken a 5-3 lead on Tyler Seguin's 11th goal of the season at 11:50 of the third period. Gallagher scored 28 seconds later, then Markov tied it on a power play.

With Aaron Johnson in the penalty box for delay of game, Markov's shot from the left point appeared to go in off the stick of Boston's Zdeno Chara. Gallagher, also in front, initially was credited with the goal before an official scoring change gave it to Markov, his sixth.

Montreal's comeback ruined the Bruins' rally from a 2-0 deficit.

Michael Ryder opened the scoring at 4:15 of the first period and P.K. Subban gave the Canadiens a 2-0 lead at 2:53 of the second.

Then the Bruins, who had scored only nine goals in their previous five games, scored four in just over 14 minutes against goalie Carey Price.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WHL

Tigers complete sweep of Blades

Cam Lanigan stopped 36 shots as the Medicine Hat Tigers eliminated the Saskatoon Blades from Western Hockey League playoff action with a 3-1 victory on Wednesday.

Boston Leier and Cole Sanford each had a goal and an assist for the seventh-seeded Tigers, who outscored Saskatoon 15-4 in a four-game first-round sweep, while Curtis Valk added a single goal.

Lukas Sutter scored the lone goal for the Blades, who entered the post-season as the second seed in the Eastern Conference.

Andrey Makarov turned away 25 of 28 shots in defeat.

Seven 10-minute misconducts were handed out to the two clubs with 20 seconds remaining in the third period.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

Bulls snap Heat's winning streak

The Miami Heat's 27-game winning streak was snapped Wednesday night by the Chicago Bulls, 101-97, when a furious comeback by LeBron James and his teammates fell short.

The Heat finished six games short of the record held by the 1971-72 Los Angeles Lakers.

Luol Deng scored 28 points, Carlos Boozer added 21 points and 17 rebounds, and the Bulls brought the Heat's pursuit of the record to a screeching halt despite another big game from James.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ron Lancaster Jr. accepts the Commissioners Award on behalf of his late father at the CFL awards on Nov. 8, 2009, in Ottawa. Lancaster Jr. was found dead in his Hamilton apartment on Tuesday. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lancaster Jr. found dead in Hamilton apartment

Ron Lancaster Jr., a former CFL assistant coach and the son of Canadian Football Hall of Famer Ron Lancaster, has died.

An official with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats said the younger Lancaster was found dead in his apartment in Hamilton on Tuesday night.

Neither the cause of death nor Lancaster's age were immediately available.

Lancaster Jr. was an assistant coach in the CFL with Toronto, Edmonton, Hamilton and Winnipeg.

He made five Grey Cup appearances, winning three, including in 1999 with Hamilton when his father was the club's head coach.

"The Lancaster name has deep roots in our league and our thoughts are with the entire family during this time," Blue Bombers president and CEO Garth Buchko said in a statement.

The elder Lancaster won two Grey Cups as a quarterback with Ottawa and Saskatchewan before claiming two CFL titles as a head coach with Edmonton and Hamilton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Now that the effects of the full moon are starting to fade, you will soon be back to your best. The various parts of your personality will quickly come into perfect alignment.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
The impossible looks easy to you at the moment. Forget about being practical: Let your imagination guide you in new directions over the next few days. If you want to know your future, look to your fantasies.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
There is no need to feel guilty just because some people have not been as fortunate as you. There is no such thing as luck: It is all part of the grand design. You must have done something to deserve it.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
What do you want to achieve in life? What do you want to be remembered for? If you make the right moves and talk to the right people today, you can give your reputation, and your dreams, a major boost.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Life seems to be effortless at the moment. Everything seems to be falling into place. Cosmic activity in your fellow Fire sign of Aries suggests that your efforts will pay off in big ways — so get busy.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
What happened around the time of yesterday's full moon means there is no room left for denial. The time has come to face up to reality. What you think is a problem won't be a problem much longer

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You can be a hit with important people today — if you project the right image. First impressions are important, so make sure what you do is in line with your long-term goals.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Even if you have done something that is worth shouting about, you should try to maintain a modest manner. Authority figures know what you are capable of and what you have accomplished.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You have the courage and the confidence to do something out of the ordinary. But remember you are still human, you still have limits, even though your limits may be wider and higher than others'.

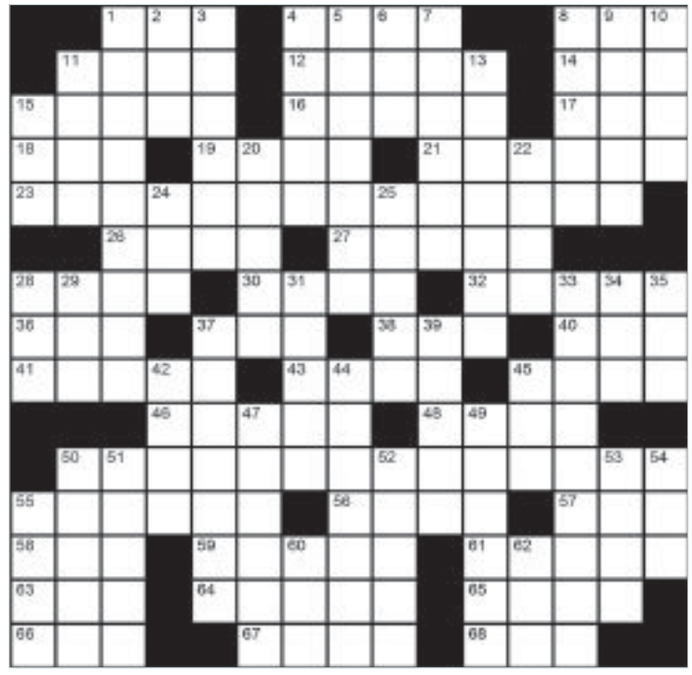
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may be determined to change your life but it seems not everyone agrees with the way you intend to do it. That does not matter. The only thing that counts is that you believe in yourself.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You have the ability to notice things that others tend to overlook and that ability will come in use today. If knowledge is power then you have more power than just about everyone.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Your attitude to money seems to have changed a bit over the past few days. But you need to realize that although you may not care so much for the material world, you still have to live in it. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

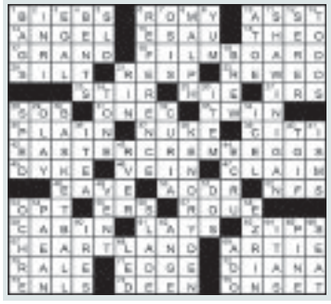
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Small film role, __ part
4. Perry Mason's Canadian portrayer, Raymond __
8. Gladiator's 1060
11. Music's Ms. Turner
12. Bitter-__ (Diehard)
14. Be out of sorts
15. Farmland
16. Outpouring
17. Gun the engine
18. "Lord, is __ _?" (Last Supper question)
19. "Rebel Yell" singer Billy
21. From whom the new Pope takes his name, St. Francis of __
23. Canada's government, __ Monarchy
26. Leavin'
27. Category
28. Flow
30. "Egad!" sound interpretation
32. Mr. Savalas
36. Mauna __ (Hawaiian volcano)
37. Ben, to Brian
38. __ and outs
40. Battery size
41. _ __ of the tongue
43. "Look, all done!"
45. Clouseau's li'l rank
46. __. wage
48. 'D' of CD, variantly
50. Hockey legend nicknamed 'The Rocket': 2 wds.
55. Preacher's podium
56. Emperor of Rome
57. GBS part (Canadian band)
58. Entirely
59. Swap stock
61. "Of course!", in slang
63. __ Chi
64. Two-__
65. Islands: French
66. 'Eug' ender (Mr. Levy)
67. Some fishies
68. Paramedic's skill, commonly

Down
1. Speaks French and English
2. Percentage on a chg. card
3. South Pacific island painted by Paul†Gauguin
4. Stupefy
5. Puts away the electric guitar, uses the acoustic
6. Nutritional suggested amount [acronym]
7. Keep back
8. "West Side Story" (1961) role
9. Teenager in "The Sound of Music" (1965)
10. 46 in old Rome
11. The Jackson 5 member
13. Luxury getaways
15. __-Tac-Toe
20. Wild†dog of Australia
22. Snick-or-__
24. Chicago White __
25. Lukewarm
28. Miami, __.
29. Rock's __ Lonely Boys
31. Shenanigan
33. Bomber aircraft of the Allies in WWII, Avro __
34. Elvis movie: "Viva __ Vegas" (1964)
35. Mouth, slang-style
37. Ghosts
39. Low point
42. "It's my turn!": 2 wds.
44. Revised
45. Suffix meaning 'somewhat'
47. __ acid
49. Like a widely-recognized symbol
50. Disney flick of 1998 set in China
51. "Kate & __" ('80s sitcom)
52. Marsh plants
53. Tapes a show, for short
54. Morse Code bit
55. Hors d'oeuvre spread
60. Shakespeare's Much __ About Nothing
62. Matterhorn, for one

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	8		5	2	3		9	
3								2
		7				6		
5	4		8		7		3	1
				9				
7	6		3		4		2	8
		3				8		
6								5
	9		6	8	2		1	

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	5	9	2	1	6	4	8	3
3	1	8	5	4	7	6	9	2
2	4	6	3	8	9	1	5	7
4	6	1	7	3	5	9	2	8
9	3	2	8	6	4	5	7	1
5	8	7	1	9	2	3	4	6
8	9	4	6	7	3	2	1	5
1	2	3	9	5	8	7	6	4
6	7	5	4	2	1	8	3	9

Today
1°/-8°
Variable
Friday
2°/-7°
Sunny
Know what the weather will be 14 days from now.
Check the 14 day trend.
TWN incorporates MSC data

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